

Even Addresses Are Wrong

Capital the Victim Of Sloppy Reporting

By Ben Bradlee

WASHINGTON CONFIDENTIAL. By Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer. Crown. 310 pp. \$3.

THE P-S-S-S-T BOYS have struck again "to tell you what you couldn't find out without us." You can find out as much with a good 35-cent guide to Washington and a talkative cab driver.

The Messrs. Lait and Mortimer set out to prove that the Nation's Capital is a "cesspool of drunkenness, debauchery, whoring, homosexuality, municipal corruption and public apathy, protected crime under criminal protection, hoodlumism, racketeering, pandering and plundering . . . found nowhere else on earth."

The New York gossip columnists are trying to provide some of the year's most sensational reading. What they wind up with is some of the sloppiest reporting ever put between two covers.

TO GIVE YOU something of a standard by which to judge their regard for fact and documentation, listen to these howlers:

"One high school, attended by children whose parents are in the upper brackets, is reported to have 95 percent addiction" to narcotics.

" . . . 3225 Woodley rd. . . the Chinese Embassy." The em-

bassy is at 2311 Massachusetts ave. nw.

" . . . a high-class shopping street . . . Cleveland Parkway." There is no such street.

"The Gayety (Theater) . . . offered . . . as its first attraction . . . 'The Barrier.'" The first attraction was "The Barretts of Wimpole Street" six months earlier.

"Dr. Ben Karpen, psychiatrist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital . . ." His name is Dr. Benjamin Karpman.

"There are 12 District Court judges and 10 Municipal Court judges." There are 15 District Court judges and 13 Municipal Court judges.

"Central Intelligence Agency is loaded with Commies at the lower level." CIA personnel are the most thoroughly screened in Washington.

"Sol Littenberg and Milton Ehrlich (criminal lawyers)." Saul G. Lichtenberg and Myron G. Ehrlich.

LAIT AND MORTIMER say they "finagled" figures on the Washington crime rate. The figures are issued publicly by the FBI.

They print testimony before the House Crime Committee as "hitherto unpublished" testimony. It was reported by every newspaper in the city.

Mistakes like that would cost a cub reporter his job. So would the irresponsible writing they call "confidential."